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NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
2000

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SUBJECT: FRENCH WAR CRIMINAL ARRESTED IN NICE PRIORY

FOR COORDINATION WITH ed State

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY  
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY  
SOURCES METHODS EXEMPTION 3B2B  
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT  
DATE 2001 2007

1. SUMMARY. FRENCH WAR COLLABORATOR PAUL TOUVIER WAS ARRESTED MAY 24 IN A NICE PRIORY BELONGING TO A SCHISMATIC CATHOLIC ORDER. HIS REAPPEARANCE AFTER MANY YEARS RENEWS THE ISSUE OF FRENCH COLLABORATION DURING THE OCCUPATION AND HAS SPARKED DEBATE CONCERNING THE ACTIVITIES OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE SECOND WORLD WAR. END SUMMARY.

2. PAUL TOUVIER, AGE 74, CHIEF OF INTELLIGENCE OF THE VICHY MILITIA IN LYON FROM OCTOBER 1943 UNTIL LIBERATION, WAS ARRESTED MAY 24 IN A NICE PRIORY BELONGING TO A SCHISMATIC CATHOLIC ORDER. KNOWN AS THE "BUTCHER OF LYON" BEFORE KLAUS BARBIE, TOUVIER HAD BEEN THE SUBJECT OF A SEARCH WARRANT SINCE NOVEMBER 1981 FOR "CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY, THE MURDER AND DEPORTATION OF JEWS, AND THE MURDER OF RESISTANCE FIGHTERS."

3. SHORTLY AFTER HIS ARREST IN 1945, TOUVIER ESCAPED AND DISAPPEARED UNDERGROUND REPORTEDLY TAKING THE MILITIA TREASURY WITH HIM. CONDEMNED TO DEATH IN ABSENTIA IN 1945 AND AGAIN IN

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1947, HE RESURFACED IN 1971 AFTER RECEIVING A PARDON AND RESTORATION OF PROPERTY BY PRESIDENT GEORGES POMPIDOU, AN ACT APPARENTLY BASED IN PART ON THE 1967 EXPIRATION OF THE STATUTE OF LIMITATIONS ON HIS CRIMES. THE PUBLIC OUTCRY WHICH FOLLOWED LED TO CALLS FOR HIS PROSECUTION UNDER THE "CRIMES AGAINST HUMANITY" STATUTE (WHICH HAS NO LIMITATION), FORCING TOUVIER UNDERGROUND ONCE AGAIN IN 1973. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF LEGAL MANUEVERING, A WARRANT FOR HIS ARREST WAS FINALLY ISSUED IN 1981. DESPITE ONE ATTEMPT TO THROW THE AUTHORITIES OFF HIS TRAIL WITH A FALSE OBITUARY, POLICE FINALLY LOCATED HIM AT A PRIORY OUTSIDE OF NICE WHERE HE HAD BEEN LIVING WITH HIS WIFE AND SEVERAL MEMBERS OF HIS IMMEDIATE FAMILY. HE OFFERED NO RESISTANCE AND WAS TRANSFERRED IMMEDIATELY TO PARIS.

4. FRANCES POLITICAL LEADERS, WITH THE NOTABLE--AND NOT SURPRISING--EXCEPTION OF NATIONAL FRONT LEADER JEAN-MARIE LE PEN, QUICKLY APPROVED THE ARREST OF FRANCES LAST MAJOR WAR CRIMINAL. LE PEN, FOR HIS PART, VIEWED THE ARREST AS A CYNICAL ATTEMPT BY THE GOVERNMENT TO CURRY FAVOR WITH JEWISH VOTERS IN THE WAKE OF PLO LEADER YASSIR ARAFATS VISIT TO PARIS AND MEETING WITH PRESIDENT MITTERRAND. ONE FN REGIONAL COUNCILLOR CONDEMNED THE ARREST AS A SCANDALOUS VIOLATION OF CHURCH SANCTUARY. FRENCH CHURCH AUTHORITIES HAVE POINTED OUT THAT TOUVIER WAS HIDDEN IN THE PRIORY OF A PREVIOUSLY DISSENTING AND NOW SCHISMATIC ORDER ON PROPERTY GRANTED TO THE ORDER BY THE CITY OF NICE. THE ABBOT OF THE PRIORY HAS STOOD HIS GROUND, DELIVERING A SERMON THE FOLLOWING SUNDAY JUSTIFYING THE RIGHT OF SANCTUARY. THE POLICE ARE STILL INVESTIGATING HIS ROLE AND WHETHER OR NOT THE RELIGIOUS BROTHERS WERE AWARE OF TOUVIERS IDENTITY.

5. ALTHOUGH THE ORDER RESPONSIBLE FOR SHELTERING TOUVIER IS THE TRADITIONALIST GROUPING LED BY ARCHBISHOP MARCEL LEFEBVRE WHO WAS EXCOMMUNICATED IN 1988, THE ROLE OF CERTAIN ELEMENTS IN THE CATHOLIC CLERGY IN TOUVIERS FIRST DISAPPEARANCE HAS SPARKED A WIDER DEBATE. IT IS GENERALLY CONCEDED THAT TOUVIER RECEIVED ASSISTANCE FROM SEVERAL CLERICS IN THE 1940S AND LATER. THE MOTIVES OF THESE CLERGYMEN (AND WHETHER ALL WERE AWARE OF TOUVIERS IDENTITY) ARE LESS CLEAR, HOWEVER. WHILE THERE HAS BEEN SOME SPECULATION THAT TOUVIER EMPLOYED BRIBERY OR BLACKMAIL TO OBTAIN PROTECTION, THE THEORY THAT HAS GAINED THE MOST CREDENCE SO FAR IS THAT HE WAS GIVEN ASSISTANCE BY THE ARCHBISHOP OF LYON IN RETURN FOR HAVING ARRANGED THE RELEASE OF 42 CONDEMNED HOSTAGES IN THE WANING DAYS OF THE OCCUPATION. POLICE HAVE CONFISCATED A LARGE COLLECTION OF PERSONAL DOCUMENTS WHICH SHOULD REVEAL MORE ABOUT TOUVIERS PAST AND THE ROLE OF THE CLERICS AND OTHERS IN HIS UNDERGROUND EXISTENCE.

6. COMMENT. THE TOUVIER CASE HAS ALL THE MAKINGS OF A FRENCH "KLAUS BARBIE" AFFAIR AND IS CERTAIN TO RAISE THE SAME SORT OF QUESTIONS AND INTROSPECTION AS DID THE ORIGINAL. THE ROLE OF THE LEFEBVRIST PRIORY AND THE ACTIVITIES OF SEVERAL CATHOLIC CLERICS, AS WELL AS THE EXISTENCE OF TOUVIERS REPUTEDLY VOLUMINOUS ARCHIVES PROMISES TO KEEP THE CASE IN THE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT FOR A LONG TIME. END COMMENT.

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